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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF THE CENTENARIAN,

Mrs. Abigail Alden Leonard,

OF RAYNHAM, MASS.

BY

REV. ENOCH SANFORD, D. D.



"That Life is long that answers Life's great end."



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MANY biographies of eminent men have within a few years been given to the public, which, embodying their virtues, must have an extensive influence in forming the character of youth; but the great excellencies of the human character are found more frequently in woman, though not so often proclaimed in the public ear. Not only the domestic virtues, but patriotism, self-denial, patience and general benevolence are found most prominent in woman.

Believing that the influence of woman in forming pure morals, and in preserving peace and good order in society is not generally appreciated and acknowledged, I consider that I have ample reason for presenting a sketch of the life of an eminent lady of Revolutionary times, who, though she long ago passed away, should be allowed to speak to the living, and have a memorial more complete and more durable than the simple record of her birth and death. My acquaintance with her began in April, 1823, when, invited to preach in this town, I was a guest at her home. After the lapse of sixty-four years, when all of our contemporaries have passed on, it is a pleasure to me, a nonagenarian, to recall the memory of this saintly centenarian.

ENOCH SANFORD.

THE MANSE, RAYNHAM, MASS.

June 15th, 1887.



MRS. ABIGAIL LEONARD was the seventh born of the eight children of DAVID ALDEN and JUDITH PADD'EFORD. He was a descendant of JOHN ALDEN, one of the company of the "Mayflower." Her father lived in North Middleborough, Mass., near the bridge over Taunton River, called Alden's Bridge. He was a large landholder. His farm was situated principally on the south side of the river. The lands, consisting partly of natural meadows, and partly of fields, which had been planted with corn by the Indians, were pleasing to the English settlers. Here Winslow and Hopkins, from Plymouth, arrived in 1621, on their way to visit Massasoit, and were hospitably entertained one night by the natives. The place was called Titiquht in the Indian tongue. It was an inviting region. The river was navigable for small boats, and full of fish, the fields suitable for tillage, and the natives friendly. To the admirer of nature it was an enchanting spot, varied in its surface, richly wooded and flowered, full of paths and grassy lanes, and checkered with merry brooks. The river here bends in the form of a cross-bow, its banks for many miles covered to the water's edge with abundant herbage. It was a sweet scene of rural simplicity, beautiful by nature,

and seemed made a retreat suitable for poets and sages. Mrs. Leonard was born May 19th, 1745.

The house in which she spent her childhood has long since disappeared. It was one of those ancient structures, two stories in front, the rear roof reaching within five or six feet of the ground, containing spacious fire-places and measuring twenty feet square. From its windows, whose sashes were made of lead, could be seen the river, the extended lawn and the meeting-house. That region, which nature had much embellished and made musical with the songs of birds, time and industry have changed, and covered with busy and happy people. Where once the wild rose bloomed and breathed in the trackless forests now waves the yellow grain. The plain farm-houses have long since given place to the pleasant homes of villagers, whose style of living shows little of the olden time. Scarcely could a more desirable place be found for the lover of natural scenery, or for the merchant retiring from business to spend his days in quiet repose.

Passing her youthful days amid these scenes of natural beauty, one might expect they would imprint a sweetness on her mind as lasting as life. These were the altars on which she offered the love and worship of her early years. The favorite river with which many pleasant associations were connected, was, like an old friend, ever welcome; and when settled in married life, it was her lot to be still near it, though some five miles down the stream.

On this pleasant farm, annually teeming with abundant harvests, she spent her early years. Her family attended public worship in Middleborough, with the church under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Conant, but when the church in North Middleborough was formed they worshiped there with the venerable and reverend Solomon Reed, grandfather of the late Governor John Reed, as their pastor.

The pulpit at that day, far more than now, was the source of weekly instruction on almost all subjects interesting to the people, for, as newspapers and books were in those few families, men's eyes and ears were turned more

earnestly to the announcements of the Christian minister. He was the fountain of knowledge and wisdom.

It was not her privilege to attend the public school but a few months, on account of the distance of her residence from any such institution ; but her father's house was a school, and he a teacher. Without the aid of libraries or high-schools, she had presented to her a constant stimulus to mental and moral improvement. Mists of ignorance and prejudice, of self-conceit and envy, were dispelled from her mind. She was led to shun the blighting influence of gossip and tale-bearing, and cherished the ties of amity, affection and good-fellowship. She was not forgetful of her immortal destiny, or unmindful that we are

“ made of angel form, erect,
To hold communion with the heavens.”

For what, at that day, did sensible parents educate their children ? Not to be showy by the costliness of their dress, or fastidious in manners, in gay circles—not to be ambitious of places affording ample incomes, and requiring few services. Our friend was educated as other gentlemen's daughters were, in the best manner that the advantages of the times allowed, educated to the habit of self-culture and self-reliance ; educated to honorable and useful work, which insures a healthful constitution and vigorous mind, and enables one to endure patiently the “ills which flesh is heir to,” and to enjoy with meekness the prosperity bestowed.

It will be proper here to mention the amusements of her youth. They were few, simple and well selected. They did not consist in the ball, the dance, the card-table or the theatre, nor in places or scenes which inflame the imagination, put modesty to the blush, loosen the tenure of moral principle, and enfeeble the physical constitution ; but in the invigorating sleigh-ride, the social evening circle, the quilting and tea party, the singing and other cheerful gatherings.

Some may suppose that the New England fathers were opposed to rational amusements and rigidly restrained

their children from indulging in them. But the aged on the stage when I was a boy, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, calling to mind the pastimes of their youth, testified that they were not wanting in interest; that they possessed a vivacity which was not frivolous and shadowy: a zest which did not sicken, but which invigorated rather than weakened the mind.

Very different, indeed, were the amusements of the people a century ago from what are now demanded by the gay and fashionable.

The theatre, the opera and the card-table were not needed; and even Lyceum lectures, fairs, cattle-shows and pic-nics were not invented. Youth, then as now had its relish for holidays, celebrations, festivities and shows, but they were simple and adapted to the times. Neither youth nor age were lavish in expenditures for dress, equipage or entertainments. Who will say that the early settlers were not refreshed and even regaled by the inexpensive and well regulated amusements of the times?

I doubt not but that the amusements of Mrs. Leonard's youth contributed their full share in forming her winning and attractive manner and in giving her mind a cheerfulness which rendered her presence so pleasing, and served to fortify her against melancholy, impatience and asceticism.

That youth should rejoice in the good things of earth is as natural and as much according to the order of Divine Providence, as that the young of all animals should frisk and sport, however great the sufferings around them. It is not the business of religion to fight against that nature which God has given us but to give us "the promise of this life and of that which is to come." It was designed not to make our pleasures less, but greater by regulating our capacity for earthly enjoyment, imparting a more exquisite relish to every lawful pleasure of mind and sense.

But her amusements, though as fond of them as any youth, did not induce her to turn away in perplexity and disgust from religion, but left her mind free to receive and enjoy the higher and nobler pleasures which the Gospel offers. Clemantine, the daughter of Baron Cuvier, not only

delighted in classical and literary studies, but spent much of her time in the study of religion and in performing its duties, and when asked why she employed herself so much in these exercises, said, it was because she delighted in contemplating the Infinite, and that mere literary pursuits were incapable of satisfying her.

Relaxation from labor furnishes us the means of preparing the mind for the sublime studies and exercises of religion. Instead of endeavoring to extinguish a natural thirst for amusements or shrinking from them as from a pestilence, every youth, taught as she was under the paternal roof, should know how to distinguish between those amusements which are invigorating and those which are injurious. The prevailing tone of her life was of an earnest and serious cast. Though serious, she was habitually cheerful, and occasionally joyous and hilarious, but never indulged in excessive mirth. Hence, neither recreation nor amusement occupied much of her time, or led her to omit important duties; they were to her the "spice of life" but never resorted to, to "kill time." She did not forget in her glee and merriment with her friends, that she was a responsible being, and that life should be devoted to a glorious purpose.

David Alden was born May 19, 1702, and died August 23, 1763. Mrs. Judith Alden died in 1802, at the age of ninety-four.

At the age of twenty, on October 30, 1765, Abigail was married by Rev. Solomon Reed to Colonel Zephaniah Leonard, of Raynham. This was at a critical and trying period when resistance to the oppressive power of the English king was taking hold of the minds of the citizens. Colonel Leonard was born January 18, 1736. He was one of the fourteen children of Major Zephaniah and Hannah King, his wife, and died April 11, 1814. He was graduated at Yale University in 1758. His mother's family was described by the present writer in a *Sketch of the Families of Kings*, published in 1866. She was a noble lady. Major Zephaniah and Hannah Leonard died on the same day, April 23, 1766, he in his sixty-third and she in her sixty-second year, and were buried at the Plain Cemetery, Taun-

ton. Their epitaph, written by their pastor, Rev. Dr. Peres Forbes, is as follows, omitting names and dates :

“To dust and silence so much worth consigned
 Sheds a sad gloom o'er vanities behind,
 Such our pursuits, proud mortals vainly soar.
 See here, the wise, the virtuous are no more,
 How mean ambition ! how completely hate !
 How dim the tinted glories of the great.
 * * * * *

“And death and hovering darkness hide us all.”

It is a tradition that the missing verse was erased by a grandson who was displeased at its fulsome character.

In the movements of the Revolution, Colonel Leonard took a prominent part.

He was a firm friend to the liberties of the people and had their confidence. He held the office of High Sheriff of Bristol County thirty-two years. His residence was in Raynham, about a mile and a-half from the Green, Taunton. Thus in the flower of life, with a mind active and vigorous his wife was brought into a responsible and useful situation. Colonel Leonard was connected with the Leonard families in the vicinity, who were among the first in intelligence and enterprise. Samuel Leonard, his brother, a graduate of Yale in the class of 1791, having, before all others in the State, set up furnaces and the manufacture of various domestic articles which usually had been imported from England. The introduction of these works opened a wide field for the energy and industry of the people. But the chief business of her husband, Colonel Leonard, was attending the courts, and performing the other duties of his office. He was necessarily brought into connection with the principal men of the country, who were often visitors at his house. As the interests of husband and wife are identified it is easy to see that a great responsibility would devolve on her, in receiving these friends. She indeed was the presiding genius of her house.

When married she did not give up her place in society, as is too often the case with a married lady in some portions of the country. Many have thought that the married ladies, though in the bloom and vigor of life, should con-

fine themselves almost wholly to domestic retirement, should vacate their seat in the choir, though their assistance is ever so essential, and that they should put on the matron, somewhat as the nun does the veil.

She, however, made it her object, to be as often as convenient, at every agreeable circle of her friends, and aid in every laudable enterprise. The marriage instead of disqualifying her for society naturally prompted her to greater courage and zeal in promoting the public good. We naturally feel a warmer interest in the circumstances of a married lady and attribute to her greater weight of character, than when in a single state. True it is often supposed that the unmarried lady is more free from domestic cares, and has more time at her disposal to devote to the charities of the day, but no good reason can be given, why, on a change of her relations she should relinquish those duties which then she is more competent to perform.

Mrs. Leonard was of a placid and cheerful spirit, subject to no unreasonable excitements or depressions, and not only delighted in home, but had the happy talent of making home delightful. Being associated principally with people of intelligence and refinement, she enjoyed the favorable opportunity not only of acquiring knowledge but of enlightening many in whatsoever made human existence happy and useful.

She had a clear and active mind, her knowledge of domestic and public affairs was unbounded—her powers of conversation and enjoyment in social discourse were great—she was cheerful, frank, undisguised in her communications. If she indulged in satire or reproof she was still mild and amusing.

Mrs. Leonard was one of the most industrious women of her time ; she had received her education among a people, and at an age when industry and diligence in business was considered not only necessary, but honorable in all classes. She was skillful in conducting the various manufactures of the household. She well understood in early life the whole economy of the family, and this knowledge was of great service to her in after life. She could turn her attentions from one thing to another without interruption. She

received that early discipline which fitted her mind for a great variety of employments. If company entered unexpectedly, or at any unseasonable hour, she was not disconcerted or unprepared for it ; but could so vary her engagements as to make herself perfectly agreeable.

Early in life she formed the resolution of acquiring a religious character and of doing, by the help of Divine grace, all she could to form the same holy character in others, and I doubt not that many now rejoice in consequence of her example and endeavors for their good. Her opinions and judgment were often sought respecting the difficulties experienced in training children, and on questions of economy in household affairs, which, at that day, were thought to be matters of great importance.

Her suggestions and counsels were considered as coming from a person of clear mind, good sense and sound piety.

Her personal appearance gave her great advantage in drawing the attention of her friends. She was of a ruddy countenance, in her early life had a sparkling eye that beamed with intelligence, her voice was clear and musical, her figure tall and erect, her step in her prime was lively ; and her whole person shapely and well proportioned. She was not remarkable for muscular strength, but of a delicate frame, and yet of a texture which seemed well adapted for longevity. She assumed no peculiarity of manner, but her affability and power of instructive and engaging conversation, together with a playful humor, and never-failing cheerfulness and vivacity made her presence exceedingly agreeable. She never appeared to be conscious that she excelled in any of these qualities ; her natural good sense and humble opinion of herself caused in her an amiable diffidence and led her to show much deference to the opinions of her friends. It is often the case that a person deprived of sight or partially deaf, has the defect greatly compensated by the possession of a more than ordinary amiable spirit, so that more sympathy and respect are gained. But there was needed in her no humiliation to teach her complaisance and amiability ; for these were the promptings of her nature, under the enlightenment which Divine grace had shed upon her.

She possessed a philosophic spirit, equally removed from superstition and levity and free from that reserve on the subject of religion, which is manifested by many of good education. She was wont to ascribe to Divine Providence the occurrence of remarkable events, and this habit doubtless led her to a more cheerful acquiescence in the will of Heaven. Thus, very different was the cast of her mind from the French philosopher, Comté, who, in giving a lucid and most instructive description of the planetary system, the position and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, never once hints that they must have been arranged by a Power infinitely intelligent.

She was a person who never felt the pressure of indigence and yet the exhibition of numerous instances of it around her always affected her, and led her to strenuous exertions for its relief. During the years of her first settlement in life many families were straitened for comfortable subsistence, when in consequence of mechanical and manufacturing business being at a low ebb, laborers could obtain but scanty wages.

The charities of the affluent, at that day, were not given to found hospitals and colleges and for benevolent purposes to the extent that is now witnessed, but were wisely employed in relieving the unfortunate and suffering in their own vicinity. And there were many such in consequence of the prostration of business, and the return home of revolutionary soldiers unpaid. It is stated on good authority that two hundred and fifty thousand pounds were due in 1786 to the soldiers of the Revolution from Massachusetts. Her hands were open to all such, and the blessing of many ready to perish came upon her. This habit of giving was doubtless one cause of her accumulating property beyond that of many others, and led her to study greater economy in her expenditures. That it is more blessed to give than to receive, was verified in her case.

Her condition was not that of the voluptuary or the affluent who searches for new methods of pleasure and speaks disdainfully of the stereotyped comforts of domestic life. She appeared like one who was not conscious of being in the possession of wealth, who affected no pride in being

able to appear better than the commonalty, nor exhibited any symptoms of envy in view of those who seek to distance all beneath them. She realized that the ambitious racing of families to see which can gain pre-eminence in the style of living was as disastrous as the racing of vehicles on our public thoroughfares in the endeavor to outspeed each other.

Accordingly her deportment in the presence of the indigent would never lead them to envy her superior condition, nor to think that she felt herself above them, for she aimed only at that course of life which has reason for the foundation of its happiness.

Even in early life she avoided profusion ; as did Madame Mere, the mother, of Napoleon who being asked why she was so frugal, when six of her sons and sons-in-law were kings, said she knew not, but that in consequence of reverses befalling them she might yet have to give them bread ; which a few years later was actually the case. Thus Mrs. Leonard, knowing the contingency of human affairs, or, more properly, the changes in the events of Providence, squandered nothing, was persuaded that some degree of wealth was necessary for the conveniences of a long life, and felt that there were too many instances of worthy persons reduced to narrow means in old age. To practice economy was to her no self-denial, though in her situation it was not so needful, as in many others, and she knew how much easier it is to adopt a restricted and moderate style of living from choice and principle of economy, than after a course of profusion to be urged to it by necessity. Because in the former case we command our resources ; in this, they command us.

One of the things most dreaded in old age is want. If we cannot then live on what we have previously acquired, the charity of relatives and friends is a frail dependence. But of such an evil Mrs. Leonard never had the least ground of fear, even to the closing year of her century. The infirmities of old age are enough without being harassed with the cares and fears of penury, and to be thus distressed after a life of toil and industry is a bitter ingredient in the cup of age, when the grasshopper is a burden

and the strong men bow themselves. Yet the accidents to which we are liable under an infinitely wise Providence, reduce some of the best to this forlorn condition. It is wisely ordered that the sensibilities of age are often blunted, that it may not feel accumulated evils so keenly. Yet our friend in her advanced age appeared to possess a sensitiveness, livelier and keener at times than in early life.

To describe one's religion is a difficult task especially when modesty and reserve prevent anything like ostentation or display. There have been sometimes in years gone by so much show and display of religious emotion, that humble and diffident souls have gone into the other extreme, and appear to think however much religion or piety they possess they must never make a display and rarely speak of it. But our friend's religion came nearer to the scriptural model. Her love to God, her striving to bring her heart into a devotional frame, the exercising of the glowing emotions of love, joy, peace and the contemplation, with calm rapture of the glories of the invisible kingdom, as they are portrayed by inspired authors did not constitute the whole of her religion. These indeed appeared to her the beginning and foundation of it, but she insisted that religion consists in showing a right spirit and conduct toward men, and that in this way it is more fully proved, and more easily tested than in any other. I have heard her repeat the well known lines :

“For modes and forms let senseless bigots fight
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

She considered “the letting one's light shine before men” as essential, and that if it does not shine, it is because there is none. One may be, by being operated upon by others, or by his own efforts, wrought up into an ecstasy of religious excitement, when there is in it no element of self-denial or of holiness, and hence this effervescence of feeling will be very likely to subside and pass off like the dew or the morning cloud. She often spoke of one's liability to be deceived by his own heart, and how much fear she had of trusting to hers.

It may be that she insisted more than some on that part of religion which consists in outward duties, as at that day there had began to be a falling off from certain high points of doctrine, the belief of which had been excessively urged as indispensable to salvation. But her candor, her frequent reading of the Scriptures and her consistent views of God as a tender and compassionate parent, as well as her own good sense, led her to perceive that to believe theological doctrines is easier than to practice the Christian duties, and that adopting a creed is one thing, and living according to it is another ; that speculative is different from justifying faith, that mere orthodoxy or intellectual religion or refinement of taste, or amiable accomplishments, do not constitute true religion ; and that unless we love God with all our heart, our religion is vain. As she dwelt on these important themes, not with a view to controversy, but to come to a better knowledge and practice of them, she understood them clearly.

Her opportunities for knowing the peculiar type and spirit of the Christian ministry at the close of the last century and the beginning of the present, were not inferior to any. Being uniformly at church, and listening attentively to such a man as Rev. Dr. Peres Fobes during the forty-five years of his ministry, she was led by his penetrating mind and attractive manner to analyze and apply the great doctrines of Christianity.

Besides these public advantages, she availed herself of the aid of religious conversation with the most learned and experienced Christians ; and such conversation was then more spiritual and frequent than is usual at the present age. Her acquaintance with the religious books of her time was extensive. Volumes of sermons, such as Saurin, Blair's and Leighton's were then in great repute. The reading public then was not drawn to cheap, trashy literature, so abundant in these days. What served to awaken her mind to religious subjects was the reading of some of the English poets, such as Young and Cowper. It was the works of Cowper which so interested the mind of Daniel Webster as to give him, at the commencement of his classical course, that admiration of religious truth when correctly expressed which characterized him through life.

Thus our friend formed her taste for religious reading from the best models, and expressed her thoughts sensibly and clearly.

She presented, in truth, one of the fairest instances of the respect, influence and consideration which may be acquired by a woman of the middle ranks without the gifts of genius.

She showed how much industry, good sense and a conciliatory disposition dignify the position of a woman of ordinary education, and she proved how much it is in the power of every woman to raise herself. It is said that woman rises or falls to the level of her husband. But she not only rose with her husband, but assisted him in rising and in holding the honors and dignities which a generous public awarded him.

She entertained her friends with splendid hospitality when they met at dinner or at tea, though it was without any display of dress, or, what is more offensive, with rigid or fastidious politeness. "The power of bearing with the unlettered," which according to Pythagoras is the mark of a good education, was always manifest in her.

To a natural vein of good sense, Mrs. Leonard united great charms of person, and the gentleness and loveliness of her appearance and manners awakened admiration. Her features were strongly marked, yet delicate, expressing an elevation of sentiment befitting an exalted condition. Her hazel-blue eyes were set off by a brilliant complexion, and were full of animation. Her eyebrows were high and arched, and her countenance exhibited a vivacity and feminine delicacy which were only surpassed by the sweetness of her voice and the symmetry of her person. Her nose was prominent, as is always the case with persons who attain long life. Her stature was a little above the middle height, which, with her stately step, presented that form and gait which is sometimes called queenly.

In after life, that peculiar and indefinable charm which results from natural good sense and refinement of manners, continued in no small degree to be the attractions of her appearance ; so that it was no matter of wonder that the

scholar and philanthropist delighted in her conversation. Her mind was continually progressing, not only from her own efforts to improve it, but by coming in contact with superior intellects.

Shall we ignore the labors of such daughters of New England who, though their names have not appeared in print, or been lionized on account of some special works of philanthropy, yet have done as much for their country and their kind as have the celebrated authoresses whose literary productions we admire. She was one of that large number of our countrywomen who did good without letting the left hand know what the right hand was doing. They have their reward in heaven, though no one has recorded their names on the fame-rolls of earth.

To have been blessed with a mother whose presence cheered our home, whose smile and glad welcome always met us there ; who accompanied us to the house of God, imposes on us a sacred obligation. Can we ever forget her, or fail to keep alive the remembrance of her acts of love and tenderness towards us ? How we love to look back on the dim vista of childhood and think of the affection such a mother lavished on us, causing our young hearts to bound with joy. Who can measure the depth, the constancy and sincerity of a mother's love. When a heartless world may have frowned, she was the more devoted to our good, and clasped us closer to her heart in sympathy and affection. No hand like hers could smooth the troubled brow, no eye like hers penetrate into the depth of our nature and search out our sorrows.

And can we doubt, when such a parent leaves us, that she has entered the settlements of the blessed ; that she is clothed in the white robes of saints ; that over her features plays a heavenly smile ? That, could she address us, she would say, " Beautiful is the place which I inhabit, worlds would not tempt me to return again to earth ; because that happiness which mortals never know is mine, and

where the river of life rolls its peaceful waters is my abode ; saints and angels are my companions, the Redeemer of men my friend. Therefore, children of earth, set your affections on things above, and not on things earthly, for the things of the earth are temporal, but the glories of heaven are eternal."

At the meridian of her life, when years of prosperity had been enjoyed, it was her lot, as it is with others, to be visited by some afflicting events. A lovely son about seven years of age fell into a pool of water and was drowned. What a pang of sorrow such an unlooked-for accident brings to a parent's heart ! It is a great thing to be able to preserve a quiet and resigned spirit under the saddening events which flesh is heir to, and to be able to say, "not my will, but the will of God be done." It is not difficult to give utterance to doubtings and melancholy musings and to acquire the habit of looking on the dark side of things. Such complainings find a response in the heart of many. But it was given to Mrs. Leonard to look through the darkness and to find repose and peace in a firm belief that God does all things well. The shades of doubt and despair rested not upon her mind. Difficult though it be to look upon the mysteries of divine providence with a calm and childlike faith, and in painful circumstances to discern "a good in evil, and a hope in ill success," yet this was her privilege.

The discipline of life was stern and trying to her, as it is doubtless to thousands, yet she bore up nobly and even joyously, as all will who put their trust in the wisdom and goodness of God. Her quietness and cheerfulness were not the result of insensibility to any form of suffering, but were the natural fruits of that resignation which the promises of the Gospel inspire. She had strong sympathies for her suffering fellow-men, and to all within her reach she extended the hand of a hearty fellowship. This deep sympathy never prompted fruitless complaints by her, nor led her to indulge in reproaches, for in scenes of adversity as well as of prosperity, through sunshine and through cloud, she recognized the truth that a good God reigneth over all. Sorrow comes to the Christian as it comes to us

all, but he meets it calmly and confidently, with the conviction that,

“All is of God, if he but wave his hand
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo ! He looks back from the departing cloud.

“Angels of life and death alike are his,
Without his leave they pass no threshold o’er,
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against his messengers to shut the door?”

That she had attained this most desirable trait of Christian character, to “rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks,” was evident from her manner and conversation. She considered that a melancholy Christian, who makes it a habit to complain of the ills which befall him, and, like the chastened prophet, says, “I do well to be angry,” very poorly represents the religion of Christ. He insists that his followers should rejoice because their names are written in heaven.

A superior excellence of her character was her ability to entertain her friends with agreeable conversation. People of pleasing conversational powers, who can interest their associates on the current topics of the day, and, avoiding on the one hand the petty scandals of the neighborhood, and on the other the recondite and far-fetched matters of reading, introduce subjects of discourse which are profitable and within the comprehension of common minds, are few in number. To afford entertainment on such well-chosen topics is an excellence rarely attained even by the learned.

But this conversational power was an observable and marked feature in the character of our friend. She did not seem to have any design to instruct ignorance, display her knowledge, or attract admiration toward herself; yet, in observing her unobtrusive and unassuming manner of speaking, it was impossible not to award to her much praise.

Many can talk easily and sensibly, at home or among their particular friends, but she was so accustomed to intelligent society that she had the gift of saying something

entertaining to those she had never seen before, and manifested with them as great a fluency of speech as was desirable. Though she knew also when to be silent, and would not break in upon another, or assume to help him out in what he was stating, she never appeared taciturn or to "revere silence" through want of information. She considered it as a want of sensibility in a well-informed person to let hours of tedium drag their slow length along unrelieved by a pleasant remark to those who become even casually one's companions. She knew it to be a fault of many in spending hours together to let their conversation run upon frivolous matters, on the gossip and petty scandal of the village, and in analyzing characters, by which unbridled use of speech, jealousies and heart burnings are engendered.

But this bespattering of others, and mis-application of the noblest faculty of our frame, could never be attributed to her.

As it is said of a distinguished author, that he could write treatises on science suitable for the university student, and cradle hymns for children in the nursery, so our friend could adapt her conversation to the man of reading, and could easily bring her thoughts and manner of expression within the comprehension of the uninformed and juvenile mind.

Nor was it with her a habit of introducing common-place matters or repeating a stale and thread-bare story, but her conversation was seasoned with a grace, and so timed as to edify and interest the company. Every one knows that a just remark has tenfold greater weight when it is spoken at the proper moment, and that at another time, or in a different connection it would be tame and spiritless. It is very observable that what gives interest to conversation, is, a spice of wit or the faculty of making pertinent replies, and of so connecting ideas as to startle the mind and throw it into an agreeable humor. We have seen a combination of gravity, dignity and suspicion overspreading many a countenance, broken up by the utterance of a very few concise and pertinent words. A stream of conversation begins and flows in regular succession in a large circle,



which opens, animates and delights every mind. It was her peculiar faculty without apparent design to turn the key which unlocks the pent-up faculties, sets them in agreeable action, and puts a considerable company into better favor with themselves and one another. Whoever possesses this faculty is as much an enlightener and entertainer of others as is the eloquent orator. Hence the entertainment we feel in reading the conversational sayings of Dr. Johnson taken fresh from his own lips. Hence the influence which the casual unstudied but pithy remarks of our parents exert on our minds many years after they were uttered.

In what is termed small-talk, or in the garrulity of age, she was no proficient. It had not been her inclination or habit in her youth to read such light literature as is common at this day, and hence we may see that the literature of novels is not essential to render one an agreeable companion or to give one the faculty of entertaining conversation. Natural good sense and the study of men's manners "living as they rise," is more sure to awaken the latent powers and give us a facility in communicating our thoughts to others.

We conceive that a society or neighborhood of such ladies, as the distinguished friend I am describing would, in their frequent intercourse, greatly improve each other, and contribute mutually to their happiness. Their social parties would be marked with an elegance and grace of conversation highly attractive. Were the dialogues of an afternoon or evening written out entire, it would not be that chit-chat which we often see spread on the pages of a newspaper or magazine and which few thoughtful persons can ever stop to read, but their conversation, though easy and familiar, yet not high-flown, would be the interchange of interesting thoughts which would bear to be written and read.

Mrs. Leonard, as I have said, had her residence in the country, though near what was then the flourishing village of the shire town of the county. Country politeness which is usually more precise than that of cities, never stiffened her manners into rigidity, but left her in such ease and

freedom, that no one would have suspected that she was not bred in the city. She could not only entertain with agreeable conversation her family and neighbors, but she had a readiness in expressing her thoughts among strangers who could not see anything provincial in her manner of expression or pronunciation. This may appear to some a slight qualification, but when we consider what constitutes the lady, and that our boarding-school teachers are lecturing their pupils on the graces, they will not overlook these items. What possible reason can be given why fifteen or twenty ladies and gentlemen of various ages, in an evening visit at a friend's house should meet and separate without having exchanged half a dozen ideas beyond the merest common-place. Yet it is to be regretted that many indulge only in such small talk, as

“Who danced with whom, and who are like to wed,
And who is hanged, and who is brought to bed.”

We know that the spirit and manners of the people of her early and middle life were of a high order. Such men and women as she represented, the world had not seen for centuries. Their religion was redolent with the rejoicings of thanksgivings, of ordinations of pastors, of military musters, of house raisings, of harvest homes, of Independence, and of marriage festivals.

These occasions were hailed by the young and old of both sexes, and served to give a peculiar character to the people. Prayer, public addresses and religious songs were no small part of their observances, for the rejoicings of the people were best expressed in the forms of religion. In their public or private gatherings their greetings were cordial and pleasant. When relatives and friends came together, it might be on the birthday, or the anniversary of the wedding of some one of the party, the occasion was fragrant with holy reminiscences of thrilling events and served to strengthen the ties of kindred and family and home, which are the sources of purest earthly joy, and allied to those which are heavenly.

It is proper to speak here of Mrs. Leonard as the mother of a family, because in this relation it is that woman exerts her chief influence and appears to the highest advantage. She was blessed as the mother of nine children, six sons and three daughters. Clarissa, born November 8, 1771, was married at Raynham, March 6, 1779, to Rev. Dr. Henry Wight, a Congregational minister of distinction and usefulness, and who died in 1837, after a pastorate of forty-four years at Bristol, R. I., in the seventy-seventh year of his age. She died at Chestnut Hill, Lawrenceville, Ga., September 15, 1864, in her ninety-third year. On the anniversary of her seventieth year she sailed from New York to live with her children in Georgia. She became much attached to her adopted home and often said she thought her life had been prolonged by the change. One of their daughters, Abigail Alden, became the wife of the late Hon. Byron Diman, Governor of Rhode Island. Their son, the late Henry Wight Diman, was consul at Lisbon for twenty-two years, and died September, 1884, unmarried. J. Lewis Diman, S.T.D., late Professor of History and Political Economy at Brown University, who died in February, 1881, was one of their children. A letter written by Mrs. Clara D., widow of A. Siany De Wolf, of Bristol, R. I., one of the daughters, will be found in the appendix.

Abigail Leonard, born July 10, 1769, married David West, March 8, 1795. He was a flourishing stationer and publisher of Boston. After his decease she married Mr. Andrew Cunningham, of Boston. The third daughter, Fanny, born April 19, 1785, remained single, living with her mother, and ministering to her wants in the kindest manner. After the death of her brother, Horatio, she resided in the family of her friend, Mrs. Franklin Dean, and died February 4, 1875, aged ninety years.

Of the sons, one, as we have said, was drowned when a child, and two died in infancy. Zephaniah, the oldest who survived, was graduated at Brown University in 1793, and after receiving his degree of Doctor of Medicine, settled in Lumberton, N. C., where he had a large and lucrative practice for about twenty years. He then returned with

his family to Raynham, and spent the residue of his life in visiting and receiving friends. He was born April 18th, 1773, and died at Raynham, September 11th, 1825.

The third son, Horatio, born September 28th, 1780, having been well educated, was appointed to the office of High Sheriff of Bristol County after his father had resigned it, and continued in it thirty-six years, performing its duties in times of political strife to the satisfaction of the government and contending parties. He occupied the home-place of his father, and it devolved on him to cherish and sustain his venerable mother during the long years in which she survived her husband. And how well he performed the responsible duties of a son toward so excellent a parent, with integrity, kindness, and assiduity, all who observed him could testify. He married Fanny, daughter of Nehemiah and Polly Washburn. She died January 22d, 1846; after her death he married again, and died December 7th, 1858, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. William Augustus, graduated at Brown University in 1793, was bred a lawyer, and was noted for his penetrating genius, tenacious memory and severe application to study. He died November 1st, 1815, and was buried in the Central Cemetery at Raynham. When Zephaniah and William A. were graduated at Brown University in 1793, the honorary degree of Master of Arts was conferred on their father by that university. The same honor had been given to him by Harvard College in 1763.

No descendant of Colonel Zephaniah Leonard and Abigail Alden, his wife, now resides in this town. The place that once knew them has changed owners, but the old mansion still stands. It was occupied for years by Gaius Dean, Esq., and is now in the possession of Lazell Elms. But few of the descendants of Major Zephaniah Leonard and Hannah King, his wife, reside here. Of these James Leonard and Amy Leonard, his sister, who are of the eighth generation from the first settler, James Leonard, may be mentioned.

Watching over the infancy of her children, teaching

them in the nursery, correcting them in childhood, forming their manners, superintending their early education, teaching them to love one another, to treat all persons with respect, to instil early into their minds the love of truth and of all the virtues, to form them to habits of industry, to rightly improve their time, to accustom them to observe the Sabbath, attend public worship and cherish true love to God and obedience to all his commands—this was the great business of Mrs. Leonard's life. That she succeeded in these efforts appears evident from the results. What insured her success was her pursuing these duties uniformly in dependence on divine assistance, and seeking by prayer that wisdom from Heaven which is promised to those who ask it. Her faith in this promise induced her to persevere in the use of necessary means, trusting that, sooner or later, her efforts would be successful.

What happiness she realized in seeing her children dutiful and kind, pursuing useful and honorable business, having it as their aim to serve God, their country, and truth, they best know who have been instrumental in raising up such a family. She found it a sufficient reward for all her toils in watching over them in the slippery paths of childhood and youth, to see them inheriting her virtues. The chief happiness of aged parents in this world was hers, that of "seeing one's children walking in the truth." Having discharged with success her duty to her children, she had an unfailing solace under the infirmities of age. She was prepared to reap a harvest from what had been sown and had been growing under her culture. Hence she did not find advanced age that dry, listless, wearisome, gloomy period which some complain that it is. She never represented it as incapable of satisfaction and enjoyments, but found it a season of rest from the distractions, conflicts, ambitions and blighted joys of the world—a time for reflection, and to survey the insipid pleasures and frivolities of earth; a time in which one may give sound instruction to the young without envying their joyous lot or fearing to

incur their disrespect. For whoever beheld her saw in her something which not only commanded respect, but excited veneration and esteem. Her care and love for all around her seemed to increase with years. She suffered nothing to ruffle the placidity of her mind, and her occupation was so much aside from the conflicts and struggles of life that she appeared, by her tranquillity, removed to a celestial sphere. What a crown of dignity, joy and glory was old age to her ! She exhibited unconsciously the truth of the Scripture promise, "Even to your old age, I am he, and to hoar hairs will I carry you, even I will carry and deliver you ;" and "the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

What were the embarrassments, the emulations, the strifes of the world to her ? She had lived in the midst of them, but was now in her old age living beyond their power, "quite in the verge of heaven." The delights of sense were shadows, and had given place to substantial joys, adapted to the needs of the soul, because as enduring as its existence. How could she regret the passing away of earthly pleasures, when in their place she had those which are derived from God's presence, and could say, "In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore."

As age advanced her piety acquired a more serene and elevated tone, very different from that of many aged persons who, not having become fortified against infirmity and misfortune nor prayed that in patience they might possess their spirits, become peevish, and distrustful of those around them. When incapable of much physical exertion her mind was absorbed in devout exercises. She enjoyed the Sabbath worship and other religious solemnities, because they restored both her mental and bodily vigor. She seemed at these times almost to realize the aspiration of the psalmist, "my soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord," and she could say from her long experience "blessed are they who dwell in thine house." Who does not look with interest on one whose reading had been so extensive ; whose observation of the world had been so particular and long continued ; whose experi-

ence of the power of Christianity had been so thorough and heartfelt, and whose devotedness to God and the good of her race had been like a deep and constantly flowing river? Year after year, to the end of her century, she never wearied in her course of uprightness and in contemplating daily the sublime subjects of religion. To see her, still intent on virtue's prize—her days prolonged and bearing the marks of time and decay—but following the paths of wisdom; moving in a tottering gait and her eyes becoming dim, but still the more enlightened inwardly; having less and less worldly cares, and finding her chief and increasing comfort in the services of the church, which she had ever loved and sought to promote—this was a spectacle indeed for any one to contemplate who admires the dignity of human nature.

Some may ask what could a person, living so long beyond the ordinary age of man, employ herself about, to enjoy any comfort. The usual idea is that extreme age is burdensome; that "we sigh and groan rather than live," and can no more enjoy the songs and music which once delighted us, that the splendors of a court or a palace, as Barzillai of old said, no longer afford us pleasure. But it was not thus with this venerable and aged lady. Nature looked as lovely and smiling to her in her old age as ever. The voice of her friends in cheerful conversation and in songs of praise was still delightful. The idea of loneliness or of solitude did not afflict her.

She employed herself daily in taking upon her some small portion of the superintendence of domestic affairs, and this habit, undoubtedly, prolonged the strength of her mental faculties. Had she relinquished all business, her mind would have lost its energy, which is usually the case with the aged who too soon give up their accustomed employments.

She spent some portion of every day in reading select portions of the Scriptures and other devotional books. We have often seen that the aged Christian is quite sensible and at home on the subjects of religion, when he has lost interest in almost every other matter. Nothing so perpetuates the vigor of the mental powers as exercising them on sublime religious subjects.

It was a strong point of excellence in her character that in extreme age she was resigned and happy. The whole course of her previous life had been holy and upright. She was prepared for old age because she had provided those antidotes which alleviate its burdens. To one who does not live virtuously every period of life is burdensome, and especially the closing period. All desire to live to old age, yet many complain of its evils when they have attained it. This is because they have not acquired those religious supports which are necessary. She was never heard to complain of the usual discomforts of old age ; that she was forgotten by her friends, for her amiable spirit secured their affection and veneration ; or that her memory and other mental faculties had failed, for she had in youth laid up knowledge for her support. Her attainment and practice of the virtues at every period of her previous life produced, as they inevitably will, wonderful fruits in her great age, and the remembrance of them was an unfailing comfort, though she relied wholly on the grace of God for her hope of eternal life. The consciousness of a life well spent and the recollection of no wilful departure from rectitude must be a source of inexpressible delight to all in the decline of life.

She did not therefore ascribe to old age evils and miseries, which do not belong to it, but which come upon those aged persons who have spent their lives in folly and sin. How could it be expected that they should reap any thing different from what they have sown ?

We are told that Gorgias, the Leontine, who lived one hundred and seven years, having been asked why he liked to be so long in life, said : “ I have no cause for blaming old age.” Such an amiable answer she could doubtless have given, for she had none of those faults and follies to charge on that period which persons of irreligious lives have.

We sometimes see some aged persons eminently content and happy, even in poverty, when they have by a good life sought treasures in heaven, and other aged persons fretful and miserable, though possessing wealth, while conscious of no preparation for eternity.

The usual causes of an unhappy old age were, in her case, prevented. To be unable to follow our accustomed business is one evil of extreme age; but to her there was no loss of business, only a change from active to more quiet and lighter duties. As is the case with a wise man, when his strength declines, he does not relinquish work but executes that which is suited to his declining faculties. He gives counsel to others, his judgment is sought, he is not unemployed, any more than the pilot who holds the helm and guides the vessel, while others perform the manual labor.

Thus our friend made old age a time of ease, of reflection and for counselling and instructing others; and while she did not do what the young and strong did, she in truth performed greater and better things; because experience and judgment are necessary to all wise actions, and these qualities are usually superior and more improved in the aged than in the young.

Another evil attending extreme age is that of physical decay. Increasing infirmity she bore with remarkable patience. It was so gradual as scarcely to be perceptible. Cyrus the Great, in his old age said, he never felt that he had become feebler than he was in his youth. Though her physical powers were shaken, her mind was clear and vigorous. Homer says of Nestor: "From his tongue speech flowed sweeter than honey, for which charm he stood in no need of strength of body."

She seemed growing in ripeness as a Christian, becoming more weaned from the world, having greater fortitude and firmer hope in the Divine promises, and this was more than compensation for the infirmities and suffering of age. There is a dignity and honor attending virtuous old age, which no other period of life can exhibit.

Some philosophers have said we ought to live one hundred years, others say eighty is a more reasonable limit of life. But the arguments that the average length of life might be prolonged is well worthy of attention. No one doubts that we shorten life by our excesses and follies. It appears from data collected in Europe and in the United States that only a very small proportion of the human race

live to one hundred years. Were a judicious system of living adopted this proportion might be greatly increased. But it is understood that a little over thirty years is now a general average. It has been said that, in 1845 the year Mrs. Leonard died, there were no less than twenty-eight hundred persons in this country aged over one hundred years. *Harper's Weekly* asserts that within the last two centuries a hundred and fifty-four persons have died aged over one hundred and twenty-five years. They were of different nationalities but a larger proportion are Irish.

These statements are probably inaccurate as very few, if any, well authenticated instances of such great age can be found.

It is an important question for medical men and naturalists to settle, what plan or course of life tends most to longevity? Of the celebrated Thomas Parr, who lived, if his epitaph can be believed, to be one hundred and fifty-four years, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, it is said that his principal diet was skimmed milk, cheese, coarse bread, milk-whey and small beer; that he ate frequently, but not to excess, and that his business was that of a farmer.

The most distinguished centenarian now living is Michel Eugene Chevreul, who was born August 31, 1786 at Angers, France. In 1824 he was made a director of the dyeing department in the manufacture of the royal tapestries of the Gobelins. In 1826 he was made a member of the French Institute. In 1830 he became Professor of Chemistry in the Museum of Natural History. He has made himself famous the world over by his researches and writings. The honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on him by Harvard University at the celebration of her two hundred and fiftieth anniversary. He never drank anything but water until on the occasion of the banquet given in Paris when he was one hundred years old, he drank a glass of champagne. See *Popular Science*, Vol. 30, page 33.

The records of persons of great age show that most of them were farmers. The business of agriculture, the first instituted for man, is a most healthy occupation, and conduces more than any other to longevity. Next to this, it

is said, the profession of a student or public speaker tends to prolong life, because it keeps not only the mental, but corporeal faculties in regular exercise. There are well-known instances of statesmen, historians and men of science living to a great age. But mechanics, operatives in factories and seamen, as a class, are short lived.

Among the learned as well as among other classes, they who overtask their minds are short lived. Artists who study and imitate the beauties of nature live on an average fifty-five years and twelve in a hundred go beyond eighty. Because to admire and enjoy the sublimities and perfections of nature conduces to the regular exercise and balance of the human faculties.

It is further remarked that very old people rarely die of any special disease, but usually from some accident, or carelessness, and hence it is inferable, that they might have lived longer if they had taken proper care. To die of old age, or by a gradual decay of faculties, is the only natural death, just as a tree or organized body gradually yields to the tooth of time.

But the continuance of life depends more on diet than anything else. The aged above referred to lived on simple food, took it at seasonable times and just enough to do them good. But those who die prematurely eat and drink themselves to their death. As a horse needs more feed when worked hard than when kept in the stable, so a man in vigorous daily exercise requires more food, and of a stronger kind than the ascetic or sedentary. When one grows old and ceases from his accustomed toil he must be abstemious, though the appetite may be as strong as ever. Experience shows that the aged should live mostly on a vegetable and milk diet. Medical authority prescribes for the aged light and moist food, soup, poultry, fish, and is not this conformable to reason?

With regard to stimulants, alcohol and fermented liquors, it must be admitted that some who have used them have lived to a great age, but probably they would have lived longer had they never used them. If these, on the whole, weaken the constitution in early life, as is not to be doubted, much more will they if used habitually in the weakness of age.

It is a remarkable fact that a great proportion of those who live to extreme old age are paupers, or in very humble circumstances. They are persons of a contented mind, and were never troubled about their worldly interests. While rich people, who are often harassed about their earthly concerns, do not often live to grow old. Henry Jenkins, who, it is reported, lived to the age of 169—though this is disputed by the late W. J. Thoms in his work, "Human Longevity"—was poor, and a daily laborer for his bread.

"Good wholesome labor was his exercise,
Early to bed, and with the lark would rise,
In heat and toiling sweat he spent the day,
And to his team he whistled time away."

It would seem that length of life is the peculiar inheritance of the poor, that they enjoy it, and that very rarely does a poor person commit suicide. Numbers of persons who have attained great age have gained a living by begging. We are told that, as a general rule, of ten persons who live to be a hundred years nine have led a humble life and are dependent in old age on the charity of their friends.

It is stated by those who have studied this subject that the average duration of human life might be prolonged to twice or thrice its present length were every one to observe a regular and wholesome diet, control his temper within the bounds of reason, take suitable exercise, and follow the laws of nature. The indulgence of evil passions, it is believed, is one of the chief destroyers of human life. Next to this, excessive study, or care which overworks the mental faculties and loosen the golden cords of life.

What constituted in our friend a bright and green old age, was, cultivating the feelings of youth, having an intense affection for nature, taking delight in flowers, the seasons, and all pleasant things. In this respect she never grew old, never outlived the times, but took a lively interest in

every one's welfare, especially in the happy young people around her. It is reported that when Tithones asked that he might possess immortality in this life his request was granted, but he forgot to ask that he might always have the spirit of youth, and when he grew old he found the burdens of age insupportable. Hence to bear old age with cheerfulness, the feelings of youth are indispensable.

It is said that old age returns again to childhood, that this is nature's law. But if this law is wisely improved, as I think it was by this aged Christian, we shall not fall into weakness and imbecility, but maintain a youthful and commendable simplicity.

Mrs. Leonard illustrated in her intellectual and social habits, in her loving the sunshine, the fire, the flowers, the morning air, the truth that when the animal life is less vigorous the heart is not sere or dull; that, though the general activity is less, the pleasures of home are greater. Though the love of new things, which stirs the young woman's heart, had faded, there was still glowing in her heart a love of all goodness which neither age nor time could extinguish.

As Mrs. Childs has said, "childhood itself is scarcely more lovely than a cheerful, kind, and sunshiny old age."

"How I love the mellow sage,
Smiling through the veil of age,
And whene'er the man of years
In the dance of joy appears,
Age is on his temples hung,
But his heart—his heart is young."

What though, like the aged in general, our friend delighted in recounting the scenes of her youth, often relating the deeds of olden time, thinking that the present generation is not equal to former ones and that we are living in degenerate days; what though she loved the ancient authors more than the modern, preferred their style, and more easily comprehended their meaning, saying, "the old are better, who pleased her childhood and informed her youth." Was not this in her, as it is in all venerable persons, an excellence rather than a defect? Such a trait in

the aged is to be regarded as commendable, because it connects the past with the present and keeps in grateful remembrance the virtuous deeds of illustrious ancestors. Who should teach youth to revere their heroic ancestors if the aged do not? They indeed know their worth. When Zeno consulted the oracle in what manner he should live, the answer was, "Inquire of the dead."

Thus when "the almond tree blossomed" she was refreshing her mind with scenes and events which early impressed her, which she herself witnessed or were related to her by the early settlers of the country. She looked back on the paths she had trod, and was rejuvenated, saying, "There is the river on whose verdant banks I sauntered on the summer days, there were the fields where the thrush and the whippoorwill charmed me, there was my garden of flowers."

While the young look forward and the world is all before them where to choose and their hopes are ardent, we see that age relinquishes hope and, looking back, lives on the past. As the shadows stretch themselves in the setting sun, so when our "eyes are growing dim, and our natural force is abated," our memory reaches back to the scenes we have witnessed.

Recounting the innumerable benefits a kind Providence had bestowed upon her and her family was with her a daily employment. She occupied herself in making pincushions, needlecases and other needle curios as presents, which she gave to some of her friends. At one time, on the threshold of a hundred years, she would give a valuable book to her pastor, or some other friend; at another she would select some choice article of ornament for a young person, to be kept by them as memorials of her and as token of her regard for them. Her undying affection for her family and friends still bound her to earth, and seemed to prolong her stay and show her that she had yet something to live for. Nor was she weary of living here and fearful of outliving her usefulness, as it is said Whitfield was, and often prayed that he might live no longer than he was useful; for she was persuaded that, so long as the Christian lives, he has a work to do. That, if no active or public business can be

done, he has at least opportunity to exhibit patience and meekness under suffering, and thus show to others the power of religion.

Her closing years were marked by a daily expectation of her departure. At night, she said, she expected it was her last, and so of the day when the light returned. So composed and ready did she appear that she spoke often of dying as one would of entering on a pleasant journey or of returning home. At length, at the great age of one hundred years, eight months and six days, on the 25th of January, 1845, she closed her eyes on the light of this world. After a funeral discourse at her residence, which she had occupied for seventy-nine years, her body was placed in the family vault in the Central Cemetery beside her husband whom she had so long survived.

In her case the most cheering truths of revelation were illustrated; that precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints, that an assured hope of eternal life characterizes their end, and turns the shadows of the dark valley of death into morning.

“Thou art gone, the abyss of heaven
Hath swallowed up thy form,
Yet in my heart
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given
And shall not soon depart.”

APPENDIX.

Mrs. Leonard's great granddaughter, Mrs. Clara Diman De Wolf, of Bristol has sent me the following letter, concerning her grandmother and her great grandmother, and the Alden and Wight families.

BRISTOL, R. I., January 10th, 1887.

MY DEAR DR. SANFORD :

I regret very much the unavoidable delay in fulfilling my promise to send you something concerning my great grandmother, Mrs. Abigail Leonard, and that in the absence of more important and interesting matter, what I have to send is so trifling, and I fear it will be of little service to you, but my impression of the dear old lady is so interwoven with these stories that I cannot show you the love and veneration with which I regard her without relating them.

I wish that I could relate more accurately much that my mother, Abby Alden Wight, told me of her happy childhood days with her grandmother in Raynham. She was named for her, and must have been an especial favorite. The wedding dress of October 30, 1765 was made over for her into a little pelisse. I have a piece of it, thick silk, ashes of rose color. She must have been very handsome, if, as is said, my mother resembled her. The ways of the household were so methodical that the little girl rebelled one day and said : "It was nothing but work, work,—read, read, and go to bed."

She appreciated that training in after years, when over my father's house she was all that was wifely and motherly. I have her little sampler from which she marked, under her grandmother's watchful eye, the homespun household linen.

The cultivation of the mind was not neglected and the best books were read and good poetry committed to memory. I have an embroidered "neckercher," the design of which my great grandmother drew, worked by her daughter Fanny. She was remarkable for her industry. I have several specimens of her needlework done at an advanced age. At the fair for the completion of Bunker's Hill Monument her contributions of fancy

work brought quite an amount. I have a silver tablespoon marked with her initials A. A., one of a set bought with money paid to her by some French officers for a sheep that had been given to her when a lamb. As I look at it I realize, if it had a mouth what a tale it could unfold.

My mother told me of the faithful colored servants, of the care and kindness that was shown them, of a narrow escape from death that my great uncle Horatio had when a boy, one winter night his father reluctantly gave him permission to go skating on condition that Reuben and Isaac (two colored servants) would look out for him and bring him safe home. Unfortunately the ice proved thin, and he fell in and was very nearly drowned, and badly cut about the mouth, Isaac was drowned in his efforts to save his master's son. Reuben carried the bleeding boy home on his back, a long distance over the frozen ground, truly a ghastly burden for the parents to receive. It was a long time before a surgeon could be procured, and Horatio was nearly exhausted from loss of blood. He carried the scar on his mouth through life, slightly affecting his speech. The story made a great impression upon me, told in my mother's sweet way, Reuben and Isaac were my first heroes, Reuben, faithful to the trust reposed in him, and Isaac had given up his life for another.

Another story that equally impressed me with its pathos was the accidental drowning of her little son, I think his name was William Augustus ; he was missing and search was made, when his light hair was seen floating on the water in the pool near the house. He was taken out and carried in to his mother. Grasped tightly in his little hand was a bunch of water lillies that he had lost his young life in gathering for her. The efforts to restore him, and preparing the little body for burial ; the little coffin standing on a table in the great room (as the parlor was called) the white lilies still in his hand, the sad funeral, taking the little child away, leaving the broken hearted mother ; all made an indelible impression upon me. It was probably the first story of death I had ever heard.

My grandmother, Mrs. Clarissa Leonard Wight, was a woman of fine character, greatly beloved in her husband's parish. You probably knew her. Of my own mother, words fail me to do her justice ; lovely in character as in person, faithful to every duty ; her daily life was a model worthy of imitation. How can I but love and venerate the memory of one who helped to train up such a mother for me. Her son, my brother, the late Professor J. L. Diman, inherited many of her fine traits of character. His recent death has probably brought him to your notice.

My youngest brother, Henry Wight Diman, died September, 1884, in the City of Lisbon, after a residence in Portugal of twenty-two years as United States Consul at Oporto and Lisbon. He was the first to volunteer in his native town for the defence of the Union. He served faithfully in the Navy until appointed to a position abroad, where he rendered his country distinguished

service. He was a man of literary tastes and had noble qualities of head and heart. He had so identified himself with the interests of the city of his adoption, that it was said at his death that no one living there could have been more missed.

I give you the ancestry of Mrs. Leonard commencing with the Mayflower emigrant ; and also some of her descendants :

John Alden married Priscilla Mullins, 1621, had eleven children. Their second child, Joseph Alden, married Mary Simmons, had five children. Their third child, John Alden, married Hannah, daughter of Captain Ebenezer White, of Weymouth ; had thirteen children. Their oldest child, David Alden, married Judah (or Judith) Padelford, had eight children. Their seventh child, Abigail Alden, married Zephaniah Leonard, October 30, 1765. Their daughter, Clarissa, married Rev. Dr. Henry Wight, the sixth pastor of the Congregational Church in Bristol. They had seven children, two of whom died young. The others were Alice Barrington Wight, who married Rev. Charles H. Alden, and died February, 1867, and Abby Alden Wight, who married Governor Byron Diman.

Martha Gibbs Wight, living unmarried, Clara Leonard Wight, who married William M. Rowland ; Mrs. Rowland died in Chicago, December 26, 1880, in her sixty-ninth year ; and Fanny Leonard Wight, who married Robert M. Cleveland, of Lawrenceville, Ga.

Mrs. De Wolf has sent me also the annexed letter written by Mrs. Leonard to her daughter Abigail, a few weeks after her marriage to Mr. West, who resided in Boston.

It is worthy of preservation. The handwriting is clear and plain :

RAINHAM, April 7, 1795.

MY DEAR CHILD :

Your letter really affected me, as I was unwilling you should imagine I could forget you for one day, as my anxiety for you has been too great.

I wrote a few lines the Monday after you left us which was inclosed in Clarys.

I am glad you had the courage to have your tooth drawn, though it must be very painful ; hope you will never have the toothache again. I was yesterday at General Cobb's and whilst I was there they received a letter from Mr. Wiles which informed

them that Tommy Cobb was, at the date of the letter, wholly deprived of reason. May we who are favored with so great a blessing never abuse it. I think you wrote you had been at the play twice and at meeting but once, and at which place were you entertained with the most rational or useful instruction? For as we have but one life to live, and that a short one, we ought in everything we do and say to exercise reason and be ever on our guard that we may be ever able to justify our conduct.

My health has been as good as usual since you went away excepting a severe turn of the stomach-ache. We already anticipate a visit from you; wish you would write us when it will be.

I should be glad if you would purchase a piece of linen and calico for me, a gown, and I will pay you when you come to Rainham. My love to Mr. West.

A. LEONARD.

FINIS.

JAN 23 1956

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